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R E P O R T  
O F E X E C U T I V B U R E A U T O  
V R I E U C O N G R E S S.

August 1930.

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The Strike Struggle.

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The Working Day in Capitalist Countries .  
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SOLYANKA 12, RED INTERNATIONAL OF LABOUR UNIONS.

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# THE WORKING DAY IN CAPITALIST COUNTRIES.

Working hours in all capitalist countries have gradually, but steadily increased during the last few years. The percentage working 48 hours a week and less is unceasingly decreasing. At the present time the average week for industrial workers is from 54 to 60 hours, for agricultural workers 60 hours and quite often even 70 hours. It is difficult to establish the real duration of the working day from official data, as the investigation into working hours carried out by official bodies are for the most part incomplete and only cover enterprises and industries in which the working hours are relatively favourable, i.e., where the 48-hour working week is still in force, or if exceeded, is exceeded by very little. The same may be said of the materials of the International Labour Office, which in the majority of cases refer to countries where the working week is from 48 to 54 hours, saying nothing however of the Eastern and colonial countries, where the working day is unlimited.

The capitalist offensive against the eight hour working day is manifested in various forms. It is common knowledge that most countries have ratified the Washington Eight Hour Day Convention (for the most part the small countries ratified all the conventions in a body). The ratification of these conventions was of a purely formal character, and the laws passed on working hours in various countries afford the widest possibilities for the infringement of the eight hour day. In some countries (for instance Czecho-Slovakia, Germany, Austria, France, Belgium and others) a whole series of systematic infringements of the "legally established" eight-hour working day has been carried out, by special permits to prolong the working day from 8 to 9 hours (overtime) while as the workers were gradually got "accustomed" to the 9-hour day, it was left in force, and through the legal permissions for overtime, prolonged to 10 and more hours. Thus, for instance, we see in Germany (The Rhine province), that more than 48 hours a week are worked by 21.5% in the building industry, 5.7% in the chemical, 17.1% in the boot and shoe industry, 20.4% in the textile industry and even 50.5% in the metal industry. At the same time, short time is very widespread (33.5% of the textile workers, 27.4% of the boot and shoe operatives, etc.). In the North-Western metallurgical industry, only 24,525 workers have a 48-hour week, whilst a 54 to 57 hour week is worked by 174,400 workers. The Working Hour Bill proposed by the social-fascist Wiessel provides for the prolongation of the present working hours standards. Paragraph II of the Working Day Regulations established the working day "in principle" at 8 hours. Thanks to the "reservations" contained in Pars. 12-17, the 8-hour day established "in principle", (in full conformity with the spirit of the Washington Convention) can again be abolished, and in fact the 10-hour day established or introduced in its place. According to this Bill, the wages agreement may provide for 300 overtime hours annually, which automatically lengthens the working day to 9 hours. Besides these 300 overtime hours, however, the German Minister for Labour may permit additional overtime work, and thus the law as it stands today, gives the employer the opportunity to demand 600 overtime hours, which makes a 10-hour working day. The same may be said of other countries where the 9 and 10 hour working day, in most cases, is introduced in similar manner. In one of its recent reports, the National Bank of Czecho-Slovakia wrote:

"The intensity of overtime during the last few months has been exceptionally favourable. The total number of overtime hours worked in July 1929 (1,823,000 hrs) has reached the highest July figure since the establishment of the Republic!"

It should be borne in mind, however, that the official data only gives the legally permitted overtime hours. The reports do not state how many "unpermitted" overtime hours have been performed by the workers who, getting as they do miserably low wages, see in this the only means the slightest to improve their material position.

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Parallel with increased working hours, we see that the productivity of labour has likewise increased. The employers, though, do not content themselves with this, and are directing their offensive against wages also, developing a widespread campaign for worsened working conditions. The first symptoms are already to the fore, and they can be seen clearly in the memorandum of the German Industrialists' Association.

Whilst hundreds of thousands of workers are doing from 48 to 60 hours a week, other hundreds of thousands are unable to find employment, and lose all hope of ever being drawn into the industrial process. The position on the labour market is far worse than it was formerly.

#### Working Hours in Germany.

The investigation into working hours undertaken in February 1930 by the National Federation of German Trade Unions, covering over 63,600 enterprises, with a total number of 2.7 million workers, showed the following working hours, including overtime, :

	Short Week.	Less than 48 hours.	48 hours.	48-54 hours.	54-54 hours.	More than 54 hours.
May 1924:	-	5.8%	39.5%	8.3%	33.4%	13.0%
November 24:	9.3%	4.1%	41.2%	6.7%	28.0%	10.7%
April 1927:	4.6%	6.3%	41.1%	10.5%	25.2%	12.3%
October " :	1.7%	6.0%	49.9%	14.4%	22.1%	6.2%
October 28:	11.3%	6.5%	55.6%	11.3%	11.9%	3.4%
February 30:	22.9%	6.4%	53.5%	8.1%	7.1%	2.0%

Hence it may be established that the percentage of short-time workers has increased at the expense of the percentage working more than 48 hours a week. Naturally, as a result of the depression, overtime in many branches of industry is considerably less expensive than during booms; during depressions, in place of overtime, paid or unpaid production is restricted and workers dismissed on the one hand, and on the other hand, the employers lengthen the working day to 9 and more hours for those workers who are still employed.

We had the following position in the various branches of industry in February :

INDUSTRY	No. wrks coming under investi- gations.	Short time workers.	Hours for Full-Time Workers.		
			Up to 48 hrs incl.	More than 48 hours.	of which number more than 54 hrs, were worked by :
Building	198,238	-	95.2%	4.8%	0.5%
Bookprinting	93,430	3.6%	93.6%	2.8%	0.3%
Chemical	231,405	19.6%	73.0%	7.4%	1.8%
Woodworking	188,461	20.5%	76.8%	2.7%	0.4%
Metallur- gical	1,476,862	24.7%	53.1%	22.2%	3.0%
Boot & Shoe	71,899	36.0%	60.6%	3.4%	0.1%
Textiles	439,738	31.9%	45.2%	22.9%	0.9%

In some industries, which had to contend against marketing difficulties, the number of short time workers has increased. This is the case chiefly in the boot and shoe trades and in the textile industry of South West Germany, where on the average over 30% of all the workers were on the short working week. More than 48 hours are worked particularly in the Rhine districts and in Westphalia. The working hours, in February 1930, in these districts were:

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	No. Wkrs coming un- der inves- tigation.	Short time workers.	Hours for Full-Time workers.		
			Up to 48 hrs. incl.	More than 48 hrs.	Of which num- ber more than 54 hrs. were worked by :
Rhine dist.	371,366	19.4%	42.8%	37.8%	7.9%
Westphalia	189,392	26.0%	25.2%	48.8%	4.4%

The table below shows the extensive infringement of the 48-hour working week in the various branches of industry (this table, too, refers to the Rhine district and Westphalia):

More than 48 hours worked in Feb. 1930 by :

	Building	Chemical i n d u s t r i e s	Metal.	Boot & Shoe	Textile
Rhine District	21.5%	5.7%	50.5%	17.1%	20.4%
Westphalia	5.2%	38.1%	56.1%	-	34.2%

Consequently MORE THAN HALF of all the metal workers who came under the investigation in these two districts worked more than 48 hours a week. Simultaneously, the percentage of short-time workers has greatly increased. This category of workers in the textile industry of the Rhine district comprises 33.6%, among the boot and shoe operatives, 27.4% and among the metal workers 19.2%; in Westphalia, the percentage of short-time workers among the metal workers was 30.5%, and among the Textile workers was 13.9%.

The data of the National Federation of German Trade Unions are ABSOLUTELY INCOMPLETE: IN REALITY APPROXIMATELY HALF OF ALL THE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS are doing more than 48-hours a week. The STATE STATISTICAL BOARD recently undertook an investigation covering 86,000 chemical workers, which established that more than half of these workers investigated on the average work more than 48 hours a week. If we take the men employed in the various industries and trades alone, we see that the percentage working more than 48 hours a week is from 60.2 upwards, rising as high as 78.1%. In the Rhine-Westphalian metallurgical industry, out of 55,000 workers who came under the investigation, three-fourths worked more than 48 hours a week. In the textile industry, more than two-thirds work over 48 hours a week.

The German Metal Workers' Union published a joint announcement with the Christian and Hirsch-Dunker metal workers' unions on its attitude to the revision of the wage agreements for the North Western metal industry. It is evident from this announcement that the metal workers, as a result of the despicable arbitration decision awarded by Severing, and as a result of the treachery of the union, have to work unbelievably long hours:

Only 24,525 have a 48-hour week;  
whilst 111,390 work up to 54 hours;  
and 63,000 work up to 57 hours et week.

#### France.

The eight-hour day was legally introduced in France in 1919. Within a few years, however, it was abolished in marine and railway transport. A special act was issued for industry, permitting a certain number of additional hours to be worked annually, namely :

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## No. of additional hours.

Textile industry	150
Metallurgical "	100
Building industry	150
Electrical industry (Paris' district)	120
Clothing industry	120
Furnishing trades	120
Leather trades	150

It goes without saying that the employers did not hesitate to take full advantage of this decision, and have even overstepped it, so that in most industrial enterprises, in reality, a 9 and 10-hour day obtains. This also applies to adolescents whose working hours at some industrial plants fluctuate between 9 and 16 a day. For instance, at Renault's the working day is 11-12 hours, in the food and drink trades 12-15 hours, etc.

Working Hours in Italy.

From the reports of the Ministry of National Economy, it is evident that the working hours for 989,600 workers in July and September were as follows: 8.4% worked short time in July, and 9% in September; 15.8% worked "above normal working hours", i.e., more than 48 hours a week.

The table given below shows the working hours in the various industries (1929):

	Less than 48 hours.		More than 48 hours.	
	July.	September.	July.	September.
Silk Industry	0.7%	1.0%	17.0%	21.0%
Woollen Ind.	9.6%	9.1%	6.5%	7.3%
Jute industry	3.8%	5.3%	17.6%	25.8%
Iron & Steel	4.9%	5.5%	26.0%	17.1%
Foundries	8.1%	6.2%	25.8%	24.8%
Automobiles	19.1%	31.4%	14.6%	10.2%
Railway shops	4.9%	3.6%	17.2%	16.4%
Electrical Ind.	4.1%	4.7%	32.4%	29.1%
Mechanics (skilled)	6.3%	8.9%	27.2%	20.7%
" (Miscellaneous)	8.2%	7.5%	21.3%	21.0%
Shipbuilding	2.0%	1.6%	50.5%	51.5%

On the basis of this table it may be established that a working week of more than 48 hours' duration is in force in Italy. In some industries (woollen, jute, and shipbuilding), thanks to the improvement which set in in the period taken for comparison, the number of short time workers decreased whilst the number working more than 48-hours a week increased. The situation is different in the iron and steel, automobile, and engineering industries, where, as a result of the contraction of industry, the percentage of short-time workers has increased and the number working more than 48 hours a week has decreased.

Italian statistics do not give an exact interpretation of the term "working hours above the normal". Therefore it should be taken that this term refers to the working day exceeding 9 hours, as the nine-hour day was established in 1926-27 as the minimum working day. In many districts and plants the ten and eleven hour day is taken as normal.

Spain.

The official bulletin of the Ministry for Labour, Commerce and Industry published statistics last year on the duration of the working day in 28 provinces of Spain for the years 1914, 1925 and 1928. According to these data working hours in Spain appear to be as follows:

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	48 hours.	54 hours.	60-66 hours.
1914	60,079		
1925	590,400	66,178	384,715
1928	602,328	7,264	15,220
		8,961	13,138

Thus, in 1928 we notice an increase in the number of working 48 hours a week, and a decrease in the number working 60-66 hours, in favour of the 54-hour category. Spain has formally adhered to the Washington Convention. The working day in the mining industry last year was 9-10 hours. In the other branches of industry working hours are prolonged considerably as a result of the overtime system.

#### Working hours in Belgium.

Before the war the working day in most industries of Belgium was 9, 10 and more hours. In 1926 the Belgian government ratified the Washington Eight-Hour Day Convention. A bill on the eight hour working day was passed in 1927. This bill, however, contains clauses which afford the possibility of infringing the eight hour day by permitting overtime. The employers widely applied these points for a number of years. The number of permits issued for overtime, from 1926 to 1928, steadily increased, as can be seen from the following :

Industry.	No. permitted infringements of 8-hr working day.		Workers.		No. overtime Hours Worked.	
	1926	1928	1926	1928	1926	1928
Building	9	25	550	1,240	76,425	140,520
Woodworking	57	175	1,902	4,831	142,148	354,678
Food & Drink	-	66	-	2,527	-	219,927
Clothing	37	89	2,664	3,472	164,372	282,074
Textile	119	173	6,861	6,695	531,688	527,273
Metallurgical	90	411	2,745	13,881	246,171	976,697
Printing Trades	5	54	142	1,570	9,984	139,867
Leather "	18	58	912	2,488	85,685	167,198
Tobacco "	8	9	1,415	1,165	184,792	85,340
Paper	9	22	456	1,038	48,461	99,614
Chemical	14	25	739	3,009	47,246	408,816
Scient. Instrum. making	16	27	309	685	19,332	60,609
Pottery	6	25	67	417	6,990	28,637
Glass	3	12	126	324	5,116	17,910
Transport	1	8	3	94	456	4,702
Stone Quarries	1	1	7	21	182	1,322
Miscellaneous	4	-	77	-	7,985	-
Total...	424	1,180	20,184	43,457	1,671,363	3,515,284

Thus, for the two years quoted, both the number of permits issued for overtime work, and the number of overtime hours worked showed a marked increase. Furthermore it is interesting to note the number of organised and unorganised working more than eight hours.

	<u>Unorganised workers.</u>	<u>TU Organised.</u>
1926	13,828	8,356
1928	28,323	15,134

The unorganised workers in 1928 (28,323) worked, all in all, 2,440,165 overtime hours, whilst the organised (15,134) worked 1,075,120 overtime hours.

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Britain.

The average duration of working hours in industry is 48 hours a week. Hotel and restaurant employees on the average work 52-54 hours a week. According to the Ministry of Labour data, working hours for many years, in a number of industries, have exceeded 48 hours a week. The normal working hours were changed last year for 5,100 workers as follows: 4,000 workers suffered an increase in working hours on the average of 3 1/2 hours per week, and 1,000 workers, on the average of 5 hours. The following table will show the number of workers whose hours have undergone changes, and likewise the general result of these changes.

Working Hours.		Increase or decrease in working hours (in hrs.)	
Increased No. of workers.	Decreased		
1919	1,150	6,305,000	- 40,651,000
1921	31,500	12,900	+ 14,500
1923	325,000	9,600	+ 108,750
1925	1,300	3,925	- 11,750
1927	18,700	1,700	+ 59,000
1928	1,400	2,000	- 200
1929	4,000	1,000	+ 8,800

Thus, it may be said that after the general decrease in working hours in 1919-20, the duration of the working day in Britain did not undergo any particularly great changes (with the exception of the prolonged working hours in the coal-mines, in 1926).

Czecho-Slovakia.

Czecho-Slovakia, again, belongs to those countries which have ratified the Washington Eight-Hour Day Convention. Like the governments of other countries, the Czecho-Slovakian government took a purely formal view of this ratification. For a number of years with the assistance of overtime hours permitted by law the employers have disregarded the eight hour day. The official statistics, which cover 17 industries, show that more than 1,000 permits are issued monthly for overtime work. We only give the most important industries, as an investigation into all would lead us too far afield. The table given below shows how many permits for overtime work were issued, number of workers executing overtime work, and number of overtime hours worked.

		No. permits issued.	Affecting men women		No. overtime hours worked.
Stonemasons & glass workers	Oct. 28	76	2,165	2,110	127,865
	" "	96	3,798	1,859	174,451
Metal workers	" "	113	4,053	957	168,291
	29	154	2,371	1,023	112,729
Machine minders & smiths	" 28	86	3,086	863	116,093
	" 29	85	4,042	669	183,067
Woodworkers	" 28	104	3,058	680	102,407
	" 29	93	3,219	953	136,914
Textile workers	" 28	270	4,413	9,295	459,226
	" 29	238	4,839	9,052	474,998
Needle Trades	" 28	91	1,835	3,660	203,567
	" 29	68	1,213	1,846	93,310
Food & Drink	" 28	125	5,423	4,436	402,120
	" 29	190	5,061	5,881	449,355
Chemical Workers	" 28	13	150	197	10,020
	" 29	17	253	428	17,865

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Consequently we may state that the number of overtime hours worked during the period taken by us has increased in all branches of industry, with the exception of the metallurgical and needle trades. If we take all the industries covered by the statistics we see the following picture :

No. permits issued for overtime work	October	1928	1,090
	"	1929	1,114
No. workers performing overtime work	"	1928	54,480
	"	1929	55,601
No. overtime hours worked	"	1928	1,859,068
	"	1929	1,947,964

If we compare the number of overtime hours worked with the number of workers affected, we will see that in October 1928, each worker had to work 34 overtime hours, and 35 hours in October 1929.

### A u s t r i a .

From the report of the factory inspectors for 1928 we learn that working conditions have been worsened. From all parts of Austria information is received of a 10-12 hour working day without overtime pay. In particular, working hours for young workers have been prolonged. According to the information received from the apprentice protection organs approximately 33% of all complaints regarding wages refer to a 50-60 hour working week, and 67% refer to a 60 to 80 hour working week. In the provinces the adults work an 8-10 hour day, and the adolescents work 10-12, and at times even 16 hours a day, without overtime pay.

### S w i t z e r l a n d .

The working hours in Switzerland can be judged of from the following table:

	<u>Factories</u>	<u>Workers.</u>
Working less than 48 hours	11.4%	10.2%
Working 48 hours a week	57.4%	59.2%
From 48 to 50 hours "	5.8%	3.5%
From 50 to 52 hours "	22.0%	25.8%
More than 52 hours "	3.4%	1.3%
	100.0%	100.0%

The factory census carried out in August 1929, simultaneously with the national industrial census, likewise covered working hours in the enterprises. We get the following figures from this investigation (applying only to one-shift enterprises):

	Working less than 48 hrs. a week	48-50 hrs. a week	50-52 hrs. a week
Total No. Wrkrs.	409,083	261,295	84,080

If we take all the workers we see that 5.4% worked 48-50 hours a week, and 20.5% worked 50 to 52 hours. It follows therefore from the official statistics that 26% (in round figures) of all factory workers, more than one-quarter, did not have a 48 hour working week.

When comparing the figures for the individual industries we see that 42% of the cotton workers were employed more than 48 hours a week (working from 50 to 52 hours), 42% of the woollen hands worked more than 48 hours (26% working 50 to 52 hrs.); 87% of the knitted goods workers were employed more than 48 hours a week (70% performing 50 to 52 hours); in the clothing and the military uniforms industry, 40% had a 3 hour week (29% worked from 50 to 52 hours); 38% of the woodworkers a 48 hours week (26% - 50 to 52 hours), in the watch industry 34%



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of the workers had a 48-hour working week (50% had a 50-52 hour week).

These figures show that the working week obtaining is that of 50 to 52 hours duration, and not that of 48 to 50 hours. There is a discrepancy between the groups of the metallurgical and engineering industries of 20% (the metallurgical industry, 14% work from 50 to 52 hours a week, and the engineering trades 17% of all the workers employed). Consequently, there are large industrial groups, in which the majority of the workers do not have the 48-hour working week as a normal standard.

#### N o r w a y .

A law on the eight hour working day has been in force in Norway since 1919, whereby the eight hour working day has been established for all industrial workers. The law does not come under this law, and their working day is 10 hours; the agricultural workers, who have a 10-12 hour working day for industrial workers is frequently issued by the government by issuing permits for overtime work.

#### H o l l a n d .

A law on the eight hour working day was established by law in 1918. In 1922, this law was amended, and the 48-hour week introduced in its place. Officially, a 48-hour working day has been established for all industries; however, it is not observed, in view of the permits issued for working on overtime.

According to official investigations working hours in 1928 were as follows in the various branches of industry:

Industry.	No. Wrkrs. coming under investigation.	Less than 48-hour week worked by	48-hour week worked by :	48-51 hrs worked by:	51-54 hrs worked by:
Building	33,639	5.6%	84.2%	2.9%	7.3%
Printing tr.	9,682	4.1%	90.9%	1.7%	3.2%
Chemical	5,792	1.3%	80.2%	8.3%	10.2%
Woodworking	5,807	-	100.0%	-	-
Metallurgical	46,437	0.4%	56.5%	34.2%	8.8%
Boot & Shoe	962	-	84.5%	12.0%	3.3%
Textile	48,393	2.6%	95.2%	0.3%	0.2%
	150,614	2.5%	80.0%	12.0%	5.0%

2.5% of the workers who came under this investigation worked less than 48 hours a week. It is likewise seen from this investigation that 43% of the metal workers, 18.5% of the chemical workers, 15.3% of the boot and shoe operatives, 10.2% of the builders, 0.5% of the textile workers, and 4.9% of the printing workers had a 48 to 60 hours working week. This table gives a partial picture of the infringements of the eight hour working day. The agricultural workers' hours are 12 and 14 a day; working hours for hotel and restaurants employees are not regulated by law.

#### P o l a n d .

A law on the eight hour day was passed in 1919. This law, however, states that the eight-hour working day may be prolonged "if so required by the given industry". In view of this, therefore, the average working day in the various industries is :

Glass industry	10 hrs.
Mining	9 hrs.
Metallurgical	10-11 hrs.
Textile	12 hours (during booms as long as 16 hours).

Small industries  
& handicrafts.

10-12 and even 16 hours.

Agriculture

16 hours and more.

Working hours on the railways and tramways are constantly being lengthened and now amount to 400 hours a month.

#### H u n g a r y.

A circular letter was sent out to all the employers' organisations in May 1928 by the Hungarian Government, in which it stresses its intention to introduce the eight hour working day. The employers' organisations replied that "the introduction of the eight hour working day would be expedient for production, but would result in disputes with the workers, who would earn less". The existing legislation permits of the widespread application of overtime. In most industries the working day is 10 and more hours.

#### Working hours in Bulgaria.

The working day in the Boot & Shoe industry fluctuates between 10 and 12 hours, in the leather industry, is 10-11 hrs., in the tobacco industry - 9-10 hrs., in the textile industry from 8 to 9 and in some districts reaches even 12 hours. The eight hour day is very, very rarely met with. The normal working day in most textile centres is of 10-hours duration. The working day for hotel and restaurant employees is not restricted, in most cases being of 16 hours and longer duration.

#### Y u g o s l a v i a.

Officially the eight hour working day exists for industrial enterprises. It is often infringed, however, by the frequent permits issued for overtime work. The employers have now applied to the government with the demand to lengthen the working day to 10 hours. A new law has been enforced since 1929 for commercial and handicrafts enterprises, whereby the 9-10 hour day is established. In "exceptional" cases the working day may be lengthened to 12-14 hours. The 8 hour day exists for the mining industry officially. This everywhere includes winding time. The dinner break is not included in working hours. Before being let down the shafts the workers are registered, which occupies on the average from 20 to 30 minutes time, which likewise is not included in working hours. The working day for hotel and restaurant employees is 14-16 hours.

#### G r e e c e.

The Washington 8 hour day convention was ratified by Greece in 1922. Up till 1924 this law remained on paper, and it was only at the beginning of 1925 that the 8 hour day was introduced in a few branches of industry (mining, printing, paper industry, tobacco, potteries, leather, marble breaking industry, abattoirs, confections and dyeing industries). Last year, the working day was lengthened, and at the present time the tobacco and transport workers have a nine hour day, factory workers have a 10 hour day, and textile workers a 12 hour day. Practically, nowhere is there an 8 hour day.

#### R u m a n i a.

Official statistical data were published at the end of 1928, based on the investigation of 597 enterprises. The official statistics show the following picture of working hours at the enterprises which came under the investigation:

<u>Working hours.</u>	<u>No. Enterprises.</u>		<u>No. Workers.</u>	
	1925	1928	1925	1928
48 hrs. a week	314	323	97,526	83,482
more than 48 hrs. a week	2733	274	45,169	63,244

Thus it may be stated, on the basis of the official statistical data, that as compared with 1925 a tendency is seen to lengthen the 48 hour week. The official figures, however, do not give a clear picture which would cover all enterprises, only applying to those enterprises

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where the working conditions are most favourable. In reality the working day in all branches of Roumanian industry is ten hours and more, and especially in agriculture.

### E s t h o n i a .

We have the following data for working hours in Esthonia:

	<u>At big enterprises.</u>	<u>At middle sized enterprises.</u>
Second half of 1927	8.35 hours	8.25 hours.
First half of 1928	8.42 " <sup>must</sup>	8.35 "

Furthermore, we register an increase in the overtime work, which as compared with normal working hours shows the following percentages:

	<u>At big enterprises.</u>	<u>At middle sized enterprises.</u>
Second half of 1927	8.3%	6.1%
First half of 1928	8.8%	6.8%

### Summary on Working Hours in the Various Countries.

A report was published by the Geneva International Labour Office in its "Information Sociale" dealing with working hours for 5,424,206 workers in 16 various countries in October 1928. As a result of summarising these data we see the following picture :

7.4% of the above mentioned total number of workers were on short-time; 7.9% worked less than 48 hours a week; 60.6% worked 48 hours; 8.4% worked from 48 to 51 hrs a week; 12% worked from 51 to 54 hrs; 3.4% from 54 to 60 hrs; 1.3% worked more than 60 hrs. a week.

Thus, 68.5% of the workers have a 48-hour week, and 24.1% work more than 48 hours a week.

We see the following picture of the various countries coming under this investigation:

Country.	No. Wrkrs. coming un- der inves- tigation.	Short-Time workers.		Working less than 48 hrs. per week.		Working 48 hrs. per week.		Working more than 48 hrs a week.	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Germany	3,826,683	348,843	9.1	245,485	6.4	2,176,398	56.9	1,055,357	27.6%
Austria	348,550	16,371	4.8	10,108	2.9	293,131	84.1	28,580	8.2%
Belgium	211,481	1,110	0.5	3,841	1.8	200,632	94.9	5,898	2.8%
Denmark	98,577	2,947	3.0	559	0.6	91,416	92.7	3,655	3.7%
Spain	34,834	5,680	16.3	2,097	6.0	16,722	48.0	10,335	29.7%
Netherlands	184,614	853	0.4	29,109	15.8	128,659	69.7	25,993	14.1%
Poland	127,940	2,988	2.3	69,105	54.1	16,591	13.0	39,256	30.6%
Sweden	256,313	17,879	7.0	10,343	4.0	200,890	74.4	27,201	10.6%
Switzerland	163,500	1,795	1.1	4,775	2.9	84,900	51.9	72,030	44.1%
Cz. Slovakia	26,086	2,389	9.1	2,381	8.9	19,608	75.2	1,771	6.8%
Hungary	90,009	-	-	23,495	26.1	39,495	43.9	27,019	30.0%
Esthonia	27,704	134	0.5	12,132	43.8	12,306	44.4	3,132	11.3%
Latvia	20,002	-	-	12,602	63.0	2,070	10.4	5,330	26.6%

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Memel Region	3,342	-	-	-	-	3,262	97.6	80	4.4
Palestine	4,180	8	0.2	484	11.6	2,160	51.7	1,528	36.5
S. W. Africa	991	-	-	-	-	530	53.5	461	46.5
Total.....	5,424,206		7.4		7.9		60.6		24.1
		401,357		426,453		3,288,770		1,307,626	

If we take these data divided for the various branches of industry, we see the following :

	No. Wrkrs employed	Partially unemployed	Number.	%	Employed less than 48hrs.p.w.	Number	%	Employed 48 hrs.per week	Number	%	Employed more than 48 h.	Number	%
Building	595,545	1,982	0.3		116,209	19.5		407,157	68.4		70,197	11.8	
Printing	142,310	1,418	1.0		14,178	10.0		112,378	79.0		14,336	10.0	
Chemical	289,737	9,608	3.3		16,308	5.6		189,104	61.3		74,717	25.8	
Woodworkers	321,135	14,384	4.5		35,650	11.1		240,971	75.1		30,130	9.3	
Metal.	1,905,572	148,311	7.8		84,964	4.5		1,057,742	55.5		614,555	32.2	
Boot & Shoe	118,538	55,674	47.0		3,840	3.2		41,536	35.0		14,488	14.8	
Textile	694,784	148,405	21.4		41,705	6.0		301,264	43.4		203,410	29.2	
Mining	1,800,035	4,884	0.5		103,491	10.3		645,487	64.0		254,213	25.2	
	5,075,656	384,626	7.6		416,345	8.2		2,995,639	59.0		1,279,046	25.2	

These figures show that we see the best working conditions, as regards hours, in the building, woodworking, and printing industries: in these industries the number of workers employed more than 48 hours a week comprises only 11.8%, 9.3% and 10.0% respectively, whilst the number of short-time workers is insignificant. We meet with a comparatively large number of workers employed more than 48 hours a week in the metallurgical industry (32.2%), textile (29.9%), chemical (25.8%) and in the mining industry (25.2%). Partial unemployment is especially widespread in the boot & shoe and textile industries (41.0% and 21.4% respectively).

#### Working Hours in the United States.

According to official data working hours in the United States continue gradually, but unswervingly, to lengthen. However, we lack complete information on the changes which have taken place in the various industries. The conclusion may be drawn, from the materials of the National Industrial Conference Board, that on the whole working hours have been lengthened for all industrial workers from 47.4 hrs. per week in April 1928 to 49.3 hrs. in April 1929. The working week for hewers and haulers in the coal mines of the United States in 1929 were, on the average :

	Per fortnight.	Per day.
Underground	79.6	8.8
Surface	72.6	8.0

The machinists and pump workers have a long working week, from 111.9 to 113.5 hrs., per fortnight.

The September 1929 "Monthly Labor Review" publishes the results of the lengthened hours in the iron and steel industry. This increase in working hours took place in 37 blast furnaces employing 12,222 workers, and in 11 steel foundries, employing 2,251 workers. Comparing the figures for this increase in working hours with the increase in 1926 we see that during this period hours for workers in furnaces increased from 59.8 to 60.7 hrs. a week, whilst the workers in the steel foundries in place of 52.6 hrs. work 53.7 hours a week.

The working week in saw mills fluctuates from 55.2 to 57.8 hrs. In the boot & shoe trades there is a slight increase from 49 to 49.1 hours on the average, in the cotton spinning mills hours have increased from

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53.3 to 53.4 per week, in the sugar industry the working week is 55 and more hours.

The law on working hours provides for the eight hour day only in the mining industry, and provides for a 10-hour day for industrial workers and tramwaymen. The working week for drug store and grocery store employees is of still longer duration (70 hours).

The data on the working hours for women at factories, stores and laundries is most interesting:

21% work 48 hours and less hours a week.  
69% " 48-55 hours.  
10% " 55 hours and more.

The five-day week (5 out of 7) does not play a big part as yet. It has been introduced, partially, in the needle trades (men's tailors), in the automobile, iron and steel and building industries. Since 1926 the number of workers on the 5-day week increased as follows:

I n d u s t r y .	Percentage on 5-day week	
	1926	1928
Men's tailors	32.3%	33%
Automobile industry	1.5%	30%
Building (organised)	6.6%	14.6%
Iron foundries and machine construction	0.5%	4.1%

The working day under the five-day week system is not eight but more hours.

#### M e x i c o .

There are the following data on working hours in Mexico:

Miners	9-10 hours.
Metal workers (in govt. enterpr.)	8-8 1/2 "
Metal wrkrs. (priv.)	9 "
Food & Drink	10-12 "
Bakers	12 "
Builders	10 "
Agricultural	10-12 "
Hotel & restaurant employees	14-16 "

#### Working hours in Canada;

The Canadian Government passed a law in 1926 introducing the 8-hr. working day. The table below shows how this law is observed. From it we see that the working day in most industries has not only not been reduced to 8 hours since 1926, but in some trades and in some towns has even been lengthened. According to official data, the average duration of the working week (in hours) was during the period under comparison:

		Quebec.	Montreal.	Toronto.	Winnipeg.
Miners	1926	58.9	48.1	44	44
	1929	59.5	47.3	44	44
Metal Wrkrs.	1926	52.5	50.7	48	49
	1929	54.5	50.9	48	49
Tramwaymen	1926	58.2	60.1	46.4	43.6
	1929	59.2	60.1	45.6	44.8
Civil Servants (police)	1926	48	-	48	48
	1929	48	-	48	48

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Public Uti-	1927	54	60	44	48
lities	1929	54	60	44	48
Truck chauffeurs	1927	-	50-63	44-46	45-50
	1929	-	50-63	44-56	45-54

The hours for the auxiliary workers in the building industry are of exceptionally long duration; in Quebec (in 1926 and 1929) they were on the average 54-60 per week, in Montreal 55-60, in Toronto 44-60, and in Winnipeg, from 50 to 60 hours a week.

In many other industries, the working week is as long as 60 hours. For instance in the :

Ore mining industry	54 hrs.
Textile	50-55 "
Sawmills	60 hrs.
Packing Houses	50-52 "
Flour mills	50-60
Grain elevators	60

The unskilled workers at the factories in Quebec have a 55 to 60 hour week. The eight hour day has been established for the miners, etc. Thus, we see that working hours in 1929 as compared with 1926, in many branches of industry, not only did not decrease, but on the contrary increased.

#### C u b a .

The average working day in Cuba is : 12 hours for agricultural workers; 9-10 hrs. for builders, 12-14 hrs. for food workers.

The piece-work system has been introduced at the tobacco plantations and factories. The piece rates are so low that the tobacco workers have to work 10 and more hours to make the fixed standards. At the sugar factories a 12 hour day obtains; at the industrial enterprises the working day is 10-11 hours. The workers at the railway depots and shops have a 9-10 hour day. The working day for engine-drivers, firemen and the train crew is unlimited, as the agreement states that the crew must return with the train to point of departure. The working day for these categories in most cases is 10 hours and more.

#### V e n e z u e l a .

The 1917 law provides for an 8 1/2 hour day for industrial workers. In 1928, the law was amended and the working day lengthened to 9 hours. Furthermore, the law permits the day to be prolonged to 10 and 11 hours, "with the agreement of the workers".

#### E c u a d o r .

The new law on working hours came into force on January 1st. 1929. It provides for an eight hour day for all wage workers, office employees, etc. and permits of the day being lengthened by 2 hours, or 12 hours per week. The working hours of domestic servants are not regulated by law, usually being 12-16 hours a day.

#### Working Hours in C h i n a .

According to the investigation of working hours undertaken by the yellow unions in Canton, the working days for non industrial workers in 1928 were :

for members of 1 union	6 hrs.
" " " 20 "	12 "
" " " 10 "	16 "
" " " 2 "	18 "
" " " 1 "	19 "
" " " 1 "	20 "

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At the present period the situation has not improved. In most industries and commercial enterprises, the working day is 14-16 hours. At the handicrafts enterprises at present the working day is from 14 to 17 hours' duration; in the textile industry it is 12 hours, in the mining industry 12-14 hours; in the tobacco and food & drink industries 10-12 hrs., in shipbuilding and machine construction industries 9-10 hours; etc. The working day for the Shanghai ricksha coolies in most cases is 14 hours.

The results of the investigation into working hours in Peiping, undertaken in October, 1929, are of considerable interest. The investigation covered 115 enterprises and gave the following results (China Weekly Review, October 12, 1929):

No. enterprises	I	88	4	4	I	8	I	6	2
Average length of working day	12½	12	11½	11	10½	10	9	8	6

The working day was 6 and 8 hours at only 8 enterprises (in most cases these workers have two shifts, so that the enterprises work daily 12-16 hours) and at 107 enterprises, the day is 9-12½ hours. Female and child labour is very widely applied; working hours for women and children are the same as for adult workers.

#### J A P A N .

We see from the review of working hours in Japanese industry, which was published in "Internationale Rundschau der Arbeit", that the average length of the working day at the end of 1928 was:

Textile industry	11 hrs.	11m.
Machine construction and industry producing means of production	9 h.	19m.
Chemical industry	10 h.	14m.
Gas and Electricity	9 h.	46m.

Average..... 10 h. 26m.

Mining industry	Underground w o r k e r s .		Average working day.
	Surface		
Ore mining	8.20 hrs.	10.9 hrs.	9.15 hrs.
Coal mining	10.31 "	10.46 "	10.38 "
Oil	-	10.06 "	10.06 "
Others	9.40 "	10.20 "	10. "
Average.....	9.49 hrs.	10.30 hrs.	10.10 hrs.

The existing factory law was revised at the end of 1928, and the Ministry was given the right to permit the working day to be lengthened by two hours. This decision is very widely applied. In reality, the working day at factories and mines is between 12 and 16 hours. The working day for men, women and miners (under 15) is 12 hours. There were 98,000 women employed in the mining industry in 1928. This decision remains in force for 15 years, i.e. until August 1st, 1941. At the seasonal enterprises, where work is "exceptionally urgent", the authorities may permit the working day to be lengthened still more.

At the spinning mills, where work is performed by hand, the working day practically always is 12 hours and more. Approximately, 360,000 women are employed at these silk spinning mills, this number including over 17,000 girls under 14 years, 25,400 girls from 14 to 15 years of age, and altogether 97,180 girls under 16 years of age. In other branches of the textile industry, the working day is of similar duration. A very widely spread practice during booms is that of issuing permits for overtime work, as is to be seen from the statement of an Englishman who spent several years in Japan. He writes:

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"The working day in the various districts varies so greatly that it is impossible to establish a general rule.

"During the hot weather the young girls have to sit 14 and 15 hours a day on their stools that have no backs, in front of the boilers containing the cocoons, which exude a very strong stench. At the weaving mills the average working day is 11-12 hours. The same may be said of the cotton mills where the working day at times is as much as 18 hours. At the match factories, however, working hours and other labour conditions are far worse."

The working day in the transport industry, building, commerce, agriculture, the fishing industry, and in other industries, is not regulated by law. It is:

Commercial & Office employees	15 hrs.
Wholesale commerce	10 "
Retail Trade	14-15 "
Warehouses	12-14 "
Restaurants	14 "
Hotels	18 "

There are no exact data on the working day for transport and building workers; as a rule, the working day is 12-14 hours. The working day for agricultural and fishing workers is 14-18 hours.

#### I n d i a .

The factory legislation in force in India establishes the average working week at 60 hours. According to official data for 1928, the men at 7,251 factories (26.8%) were employed 48 hours a week, at 12.72% of the factories the working week amounted to 54 hours, and at 60.48% of the factories working hours were 51-60 in the week. Since 1928, no great changes have taken place, and the law, which expired on September 20, 1928, was prolonged till April 7, 1930. Child labour is very extensively employed. Cases are not infrequent when children of 10 and even 8 are employed at the factories. In most cases the working day is 6 hours (for children employed in shift work). At the jute mills in Bengal, 65% of the workers are employed in two shifts of 12 hours. The working day for women in the same industry is 13 1/2 hours (from 5.30 a.m. to 7 p.m.)

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